DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 291 049 CG 020 581

AUTHOR Krieshok, Thomas S.
TITLE Assessment of Adolescent Career Interests and Values.
PUB DATE Aug 87
NOTE 15p.; Paper presented at the Annual Convention of the American Psychological Association (95th, New York, NY, August 28-September 1, 1987).
PUB TYPE Reports - Evaluative/Feasibility (142) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Adolescents; Career Development; *Career Planning; Change Strategies; *Counseling Theories; *School Guidance; Secondary Education; Student Evaluation; *Student Interests; Values; Values Clarification; *Vocational Evaluation; Vocational Interests; Vocational Maturity
IDENTIFIERS Super (Donald E)

ABSTRACT

A broader perspective of vocational assessment based largely on Super's formulations of the career development process, calling for greater attention to role salience and career maturity is described. The most promising development in career planning in recent years, the application of information processing theory to career decision making, is discussed. The following changes in emphasis are predicted about what should be included in vocational assessment and in the methods used to accomplish assessment: (1) process variables and assessment methods will become more crucial; (2) assessment tools placing a greater emphasis on articulating one's personal constructs will be used; and (3) counselors will move away from interest assessments to more detailed and ideographic examinations of skills used in performing specific functions and values which delineate the work environment. (ABL)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED291049

Assessment of Adolescent Career Interests and Values

Thomas S. Krieshok
Department of Counseling Psychology
116 Bailey Hall
University of Kansas
Lawrence, Kansas 66045
(913) 864-3931

CG 020581

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
☑ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
Thomas S. Krieshok
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

Presented at 95th Annual Convention of the American Psychological Association at New York City, August, 1987.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Assessment of Adolescent Career Interests and Values

Adolescence is arguably the most critical period in one's lifetime of career development, and career development is certainly one of the most anxiety arousing and critical issues for adolescents. For years, the ACT report has found career planning issues to be among the most important concerns of high schoolers. As recently as 1983, 71% considered it a concern for which they would have liked much help; while 43% said they had received little or no career planning services through their high school years (Prediger & Sawyer, 1986).

Within those career planning services, assessment has typically focussed on clarifying interests and values in hopes of predicting and guiding eventual career selection. While this continues to be a valuable process, some authors (Hohensil, 1982; Super, 1984) argue for a more conprehensive conceptualization of career development and thus a more comprehensive program of assessment. Whereas the traditional approach to vocational assessment focuses solely on the matching of the student's interests and aptitudes with those required of various occupations, a broader framework allows the consideration of dimensions

related to the choice process itself and to the client's readiness to engage in the process.

Perhaps the broadest conceptualization of career development has been spelled out by Super (1953, 1957). Over the years, he has moved from dealing primarily with the work dimension of life to putting work in the context of the several roles people assume in their lives as a means to achieving satisfaction or self-actualization. A recent work (Super, 1980) attends to all the roles we assume, their interaction, ebb and flow, and the conflicts and benefits inherent in that process. His "Life-Career Rainbow" lays out the nine most typical roles taken and the four typical theatres in which those are played out.

A constant theme of Super's writings has been that when people do make choices (to add a new role or to change the way they are playing a role) they do so in an attempt to implement their self-concept, the constellation of images, conceptions, and statements persons have about themselves as they believe they are, as they believe others see them, and as they would like to be in the future. This implementation process takes place in stages, with a person first growing (developing a self), then exploring (experiencing self

in the world), establishing (themselves in a given role), maintaining (growing more comfortable that this particular role really does implement this part of the self-concept), and declining (eventually letting other roles become more important). A person's readiness to engage in this implementation process has been labeled career maturity.

Adopting such a broad understanding of the career development process makes important the assessment, not only of real and perceived self-concepts, but of the relationships between the various life roles and the individual's career maturity, or readiness to participate in gathering information and making choices which will help shape their future.

Super recommends assessing role salience, career maturity, and self-concepts aspects first, followed by the two areas most familiar to psychologists, aptitude level and interest area.

Role Salience

Assessment of role salience allows us to work differently with someone for whom the work role is quite secondary versus someone who is tying up a great deal of their identity in the work role. Low career maturity and a flat pattern of interests means one

thing if work role salience is high; it would be treated very differently if work role salience were quite low. While formal instruments for assessing the salience of various roles are just now being offered, life history data and interview data could certainly give insight into this dimension.

Career Maturity

Once role salience is established, career maturity is the next logical dimension to be assessed. Career maturity is one's readiness to engage in the stage appropriate tasks at hand, thus high career maturity would signal behaviors toward addressing those tasks while low career maturity would find one avoiding those tasks or dealing with them in a dysfunctional or unsatisfactory manner.

Popular career maturity measures include Super's own Career Developement Inventory (Super, 1983; with forms for both school and college/adult populations), Crites' Career Maturity Inventory (Crites, 1978), and some would argue Holland's Vocational Identity Scale (Holland, 1980). The Super and Crites instruments are rather lengthy multiscaled instruments measuring a broad range of variables including awareness of career decision making issues and processes, knowledge of

general and specific occupational information, and attitude toward career decision making. In contrast, Holland's instrument is an 18 item measure which taps the person's current and past level of difficulty in focussing their career interests.

Assessment of career maturity would indicate different interventions for the high school senior who has already investigated occupations in the library, spoken with adult workers in those occupations, and is trying to decide which college is most suitable in terms of cost and quality; versus the high school senior whose parents have sent her in to decide which college she should go to. Clearly the first is already engaging in stage appropriate tasks, whereas the second, while at least coming in, has not shown the same level of processing around the decision, either covertly or in her information seeking behaviors. The first would call for an intervention which facilitates the decision making process with the given data.. The second may entail more preliminary self assessment or even some reality confrontation.

Aspects of the Self-Concepts

Super argues for the importance of assessing such self-concept dimensions as level of self esteem and

cognitive complexity. Persons with low self esteem are less likely to make good occupational choices, and persons whose self-concepts are simple (contain few dimensions or traits) will also be at a disadvantage when seeking to match them with known occupations.

Level of Aptitude and Interest Area

Once role salience, career maturity and such have been assessed, the actual assessment of interests and abilities may be undertaken. This is the area most familiar to psychologists, with a plethora of instruments at our disposal. The most popular of those include the WAIS-R, DAT (or ASVAB) and course grades for level of functioning; and the Strong-Campbell Interest Inventory, the Kuder Vocational Interest Survey, and the Self Directed Search as measures of interests.

Unfortunately, many psychologists and counselors begin and end at this point, assuming that variables such as role salience and career maturity are either not important or will eventually take care of themselves. If we think in terms of career development as the implementation of the self-concepts, however, we see more clearly the importance of examining not only the dimensions of the self-concepts themselves, but the

relative importance of work, how differentiated and well articulated the self-concepts are, how adequate is the person's world of work knowledge, and how willing is the person to take risks in gathering necessary information and in actually making decisions.

Decision Making Variables

There are currently several lines of research examining decision making process variables. Harren's (1980) Assessment of Career Decision Making Styles looks at one's style of decision making as it relates to Rational, Intuitive, and Dependent scales. Osipow's (1976) Career Decision Scale examines not so much style as level or place in the process as it examines the number of barriers the person is currently experiencing in their attempts to make a career decision.

The information processing literature is just now being applied to career decision making, leading to some rather dramatic assertions (Heppner & Krauskapf, 1987; Krumboltz, 1983; Pitz & Harren, 1980). These researchers suggest that decision makers can only process with very limited amounts of information at a given time and they thus tend to overvalue information which is readily available to immediate memory, to

represent unfamiliar data with more familiar data, and to make serious errors in failing to adjust to disconfirmatory information. Cochran (1983) and Krieshok, Arnold, Kuperman, and Schmitz (1986) found that high school and college students were not very accurate in identifying the implicit values they were using to make rankings of their interest in occupations.

Findings such as these are disturbing to those of us who rely so heavily on self report measures of interests to help guide students through the career decision making process. Of particular concern are those students who, with at least enough savvy to know they are undecided about their future directions, show up and announce, "I want to take the tests." Many of these want to have some direction but are quite resistant to any of our attempts to have them do any of the work to get to that goal of being decided. It is as if they were hoping to take the tests, with as little effort as possible, and to be told by the tests (interpretted by the psychologist or counselor) that area x, y, or z is their future. Many times we accept this agenda, not quite knowing what else to do with those folks, not quite recognizing that we have

assessed neither work role salience nor career maturity, and not really knowing what to do with them if we had assessed them to have low career maturity or low work role salience.

I believe the research on information processing will lead us to very different notions about assessment of career development variables in future years. Not only will process variables become more crucial in our assessment, but the methods we use for assessing the dimensions of the self-concepts themselves will change as well. I believe that the standard "first response is usually the best" will become less popular in favor of more interactive and probing assessments such as the occupational card sort, guided imagery, and the structured life career assessment interview, all of which call for more pensive responses, and place a greater emphasis on articulating one's personal constructs.

While the assessment of interests will likely be with us for awhile, I suggest that well trained career counselors will get away from their use in favor of a more detailed and ideographic examination of skills used in performing specific functions and values which delineate the ideal work environment. Interests may

become much like "user languages" in computer programming, the language which the clients' themselves understand and speak, but one level of sophistication and accuracy removed from the machine language of skills and values utilized by the career counselor in their conceptualization of and interventions with clients. Many practicing career counselors have moved in this direction as they have adopted Bolles (1987) model for counseling career changers.

Summary

I have outlined here a broader prescription of vocational assessment based largely on Super's formulations of the career development process, calling for greater attention to work role salience and career maturity. In addition, I have noted what I consider to be the most promising development in career planning in recent years, the application of information processing theory to career decision making. Out of that I have predicted some changes in emphasis around what should be included in vocational assessment and in the methods used to accomplish that.

References

Bolles, R.N. (1987). What color is your parachute? Berkeley, CA: Ten Speed Press.

Cochran, L. (1983). Implicit versus explicit importance of career values in making a career decision. Journal of Counseling Psychology, 30, 188-193.

Crites, J.O. (1978). Career maturity inventory. Monterey, CA: CTB/McGraw.

Harren, V.A. (1980). Assessment of Career Decision Making (ACDM): Preliminary Manual. Carbondale, IL: Department of Psychology, Southern Illinois University.

Heppner, P.P. & Krauskopf, C.J. (1987). An information-processing approach to personal problem solving. The Counseling Psychologist, 15, (3), 371-447.

Hohenshil, T.H. (1982). Secondary school psychological services: Vocational assessment procedures for handicapped students. In T.H. Hohenshil, W.T. Anderson, & J.F. Salwan (Eds.), Secondary school psychological services: Focus on vocational assessment procedures for handicapped students. Blacksburg, VA: Virginia Polytechnic Institute. (ERIC Document Reproduction No. ED 229 704).

Holland, J.L., Daiger, D.C., & Power, P.G. (1980). My Vocational Situation. Palo Alto, CA: Consulting Psychologists Press.

Krieshok, T.S., Arnold, J.J., Kuperman, B.D., & Schmitz, NK. (1986). Articulation of career values: Comparison of three measures. Journal of Counseling PsychologyPs, 33Ps, 475-478.

Krumboltz, J.D. (1983). Private rules in career decision making. Columbus, Ohio: Advanced Study Center, National Center for Research in Vocational Education, Ohio State University.

Osipow, S.H. & others. (1976). The Career Decision Scale. Columbus, Ohio: Marathon Consulting and Press.

Pitz, G.F. & Harren, V.A. (1980). An analysis of career decision making from the point of view of information processing and decision theory. Journal of Vocational Behavior, 16, 320-346.

Prediger, D.J., & Sawyer, R.L. (1986). Ten years of career development: A nationwide study of high school students. Journal of Counseling and Development, 65, 45-49.

Super, D.E. (1953). Theory of vocational development. American Psychologist, 8, 185-190.

Super, D.E. (1957). The psychology of careers. New York: Harper.

Super, D.E. (1980). A life-span, life-space approach to career development. Journal of Vocational Behavior, 13, 282-298.

Super, D.E. (1984). Career and life development. In D. Brown & L. Brooks (Eds.) Career Choice and Development. San Francisco: Jossey Bass.

Super, D.E., Thompson, A.S., Lindeman, R.H., Jordan, J.P., & Myers, R.A. (1981). The Career Development Inventory. Palo Alto: Consulting Psychologists Press.